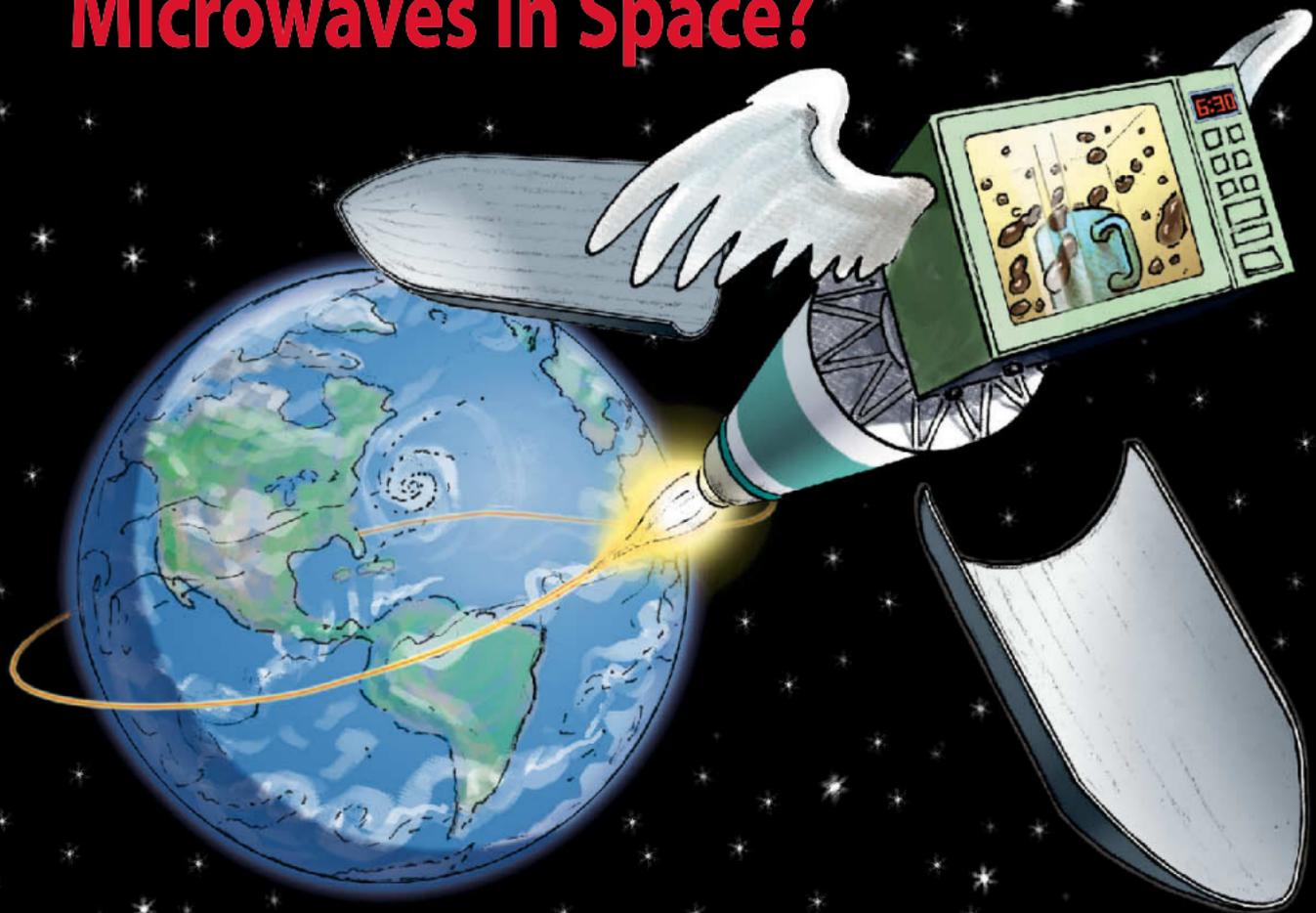
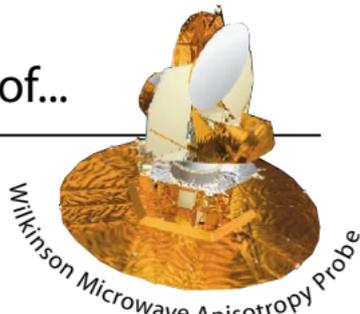


Microwaves in Space?





Yes, but maybe not the kind you are thinking of...



Actual length of WMAP observed microwaves

Actual length of a microwave oven wave 4.8in/12.24cm



Microwave ovens use electromagnetic waves. Short electromagnetic waves make the light we see with our eyes, but microwave ovens use very long waves (about 12 cm). Electromagnetic waves of all different lengths are found in space, including microwaves. The Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe (WMAP) detects microwaves of 5 different sizes. Scientists believe that the microwaves found in space are light waves left over from the Big Bang after they have been stretched out by the incredible expansion on the universe. WMAP measurements enable scientists to learn many things about the universe by studying this "fossil" light from the distant past, including the age and contents of the universe.

For more information on microwaves and the WMAP mission go to: <http://wmap.gsfc.nasa.gov>

